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Remarks

Applicants have carefully reviewed the Application in light of the Office Action dated April 16, 2002. At the time of the Office Action, Claims 1-9, 12-16, 18-35, 37-42, and 44-63 were pending. The Examiner rejected Claims 1-16, 18-33, 35, 38-40, 42-47, and 58-63. The Examiner objected to Claims 34, 36-37, 41, 48-49, and 51-57. Claims 12, 15 and 37 have been cancelled. Thus, Claims 1-9, 13-14, 16, 18-35, 38-42, and 44-63 are presently pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Allowable Claims

The Examiner indicates that Claims 34, 36-37, 41, 48-49, and 51-56 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. (Detailed Action p. 27, ¶ 13). Applicants thank the Examiner for this finding.

Unspecified Rejections


While the Examiner indicates that Claims 21-22 are rejected, (Office Action Summary ¶ 6), the Examiner provides no statutory basis or reasoning for the rejection, (Detailed Action ¶¶ 1-14). Thus, Applicants are left with no way to meaningfully respond to the rejection of these claims. Applicants again request that the Examiner provide a statutory basis and reasoning for the rejection of Claims 21-22 or allow Claims 21-22.

Section 102 Rejections

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 11-12, 16, 18-20, 23, 30-31 and 63 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to Knudson et al, ("Knudson"). Of these, Claims 1 and 63 are independent. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the reasons discussed below.

Claim 1 recites, in part, "wherein the data associated with the security access information of personnel comprise a role definition of a coordinator having authorization to assign one or more persons to the at least one business unit, assign at least one role to each person, and add projects and accounts for the at least one business unit", "wherein the data associated with the security access information of personnel comprise a role table operable to store at least one valid role, and an authorization hierarchical organization of the at least one

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valid role, wherein the authorization hierarchical organization is associated with increasing levels of data access", and "wherein the data associated with the security access information of personnel associates at least one of the valid roles relevant to the project to each person". Amended Claim 1 includes elements similar to allowable dependent Claim 37 and independent Claim 32. See discussion of Claim 32 below. Further, Knudson does not teach or suggest these elements of amended Claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that *Knudson* fails to teach or suggest all of the elements of Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claim 1.

Amended independent Claim 63 is patentable for at least the reasons discussed above in association with Claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of Claim 63.

Dependent Claims 2, 4-8, 16, 18-20, 23, and 30-31 depend from independent Claim 1, which is shown above to be allowable. Thus, Claims 2, 4-8, 16, 18-20, 23, and 30-31 are patentable over *Knudson* as depending from an allowable base claim and as providing further distinctions over the cited reference. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claims 2, 4-8, 16, 18-20, 23, and 30-31.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

Claims 27, 32, 35, 38-40, 42, 44, 45-47, 50, 57, and 60-62 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to Knudson et al. ("*Knudson*") in view *PMBK*. Of these, Claim 32 is independent. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Rejected independent Claim 32 has been amended to include the elements of allowable dependent Claim 37. Dependent Claim 37 depends directly from independent Claim 32. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Claim 32 is allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of independent Claim 32.

The Examiner rejects dependent Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to Knudson et al. ("*Knudson*") in view of Gary Hamel et al., *THE E-CORPORATION: More than just Web-based, it's building a new industrial order*

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("Gary Hamel"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 3 depends from Claim 1, which is shown above to be allowable. Thus, Claim 3 is patentable over *Knudson* and *Gary Hamel* as depending from an allowable base claim and as providing further distinctions over the cited references. Therefore, Claim 3 is allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claim 3.

The Examiner rejects dependent Claims 9, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to *Knudson et al. ("Knudson")* in view of *Bates William, Improving project management: better project management begins with a project management office ("Bates William")*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claims 9, 13 and 14 depend from Claim 1, which is shown above to be allowable. Thus, Claims 9, 13 and 14 are patentable over *Knudson* and *Bates William* as depending from an allowable base claim and as providing further distinctions over the cited references. Therefore, Claims 9, 13 and 14 are allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claims 9, 13 and 14.

Dependent Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to *Knudson et al. ("Knudson")* in view of the publication "A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge" by the Project Management Institute Standards Committee ("*PMBK*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 15 depends from Claim 1, which is shown above to be allowable. Thus, Claim 15 is patentable over *Knudson* and *PMBK* as depending from an allowable base claim and as providing further distinctions over the cited references. Therefore, Claim 15 is allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claim 15.

Dependent Claims 24-26 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to *Knudson et al. ("Knudson")* in view of *Bates William*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claims 24-26 and 28 depend from Claim 1, which is shown above to be allowable. Thus, Claims 24-26 and 28 are patentable over *Knudson* and *Bates William* as depending from

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an allowable base claim and as providing further distinctions over the cited references. Therefore, Claims 24-26 and 28 are allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claims 24-26 and 28.

Dependent Claim 29 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to Knudson et al. ("*Knudson*") in view of *Bates William* as applied to Claim 28, and further in view of *PMBK*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 29 depends from Claim 1, which is shown above to be allowable. Thus, Claim 29 is patentable over *Knudson*, *Bates William*, and *PMBK* as depending from an allowable base claim and as providing further distinctions over the cited references. Therefore, Claim 29 is allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claim 29.

Dependent Claims 33 and 59 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to Knudson et al. ("*Knudson*") in view of *PMBK* as applied to Claim 32 above, and further in view of *Bates William*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claims 33 and 59 depend from Claim 32, which is shown above to be allowable. Thus, Claims 33 and 59 are patentable over *Knudson*, *PMBK*, and *Bates William* as depending from an allowable base claim and as providing further distinctions over the cited references. Therefore, Claims 33 and 59 is allowable over *Knudson*, *PMBK* and *Bates William*, either alone or in combination. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claims 33 and 59.

Dependent Claim 58 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,765,140 issued to Knudson et al. ("*Knudson*") as applied to Claim 33 above, and further in view of *Gary Hamel*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 58 depends from Claim 32, which is shown above to be allowable. Thus, Claim 58 is patentable over *Knudson* and *Gary Hamel* as depending from an allowable base claim and as providing further distinctions over the cited references. Therefore, Claim 58 is allowable over *Knudson* and *Gary Hamel*, either alone or in combination. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claim 58.

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In general, dependent Claims 2-11, 13-14, 16 and 18-31 depend from independent Claim 1, and dependent Claims 33-36, 38-42 and 44-62 depend from independent Claim 32. Claims 1 and 32 have been shown above to be allowable. Therefore, Claims 2-16, 18-31, 33-42 and 44-62 are patentable as depending from an allowable base claim and as defining further distinctions over the cited art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of dependent Claims 2-11, 13-14, 16, 18-31, 33-36, 38-42 and 44-62.

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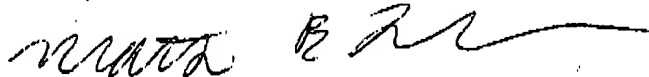
Conclusion

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-11, 13-14, 16, 18-36, 38-42 and 44-63.

Although Applicants believe that no other fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-0765 of Electronic Data Systems Corporation.

If there are matters that can be discussed by telephone to further the prosecution of this application, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner call its attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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Attachment A – Marked-Up Claims

1. (Amended) A program office management system, comprising:
a program office database storing:
 - informational data associated with accounts, projects, and programs;
 - financial data associated with the accounts, projects, and programs;
 - schedule and progress data associated with the accounts, projects, and programs;
 - data associated with personnel, roles, and security access information thereof;
 - a tactic table operable to store at least one predefined tactic supported by the program office database and a valid tactic type for each tactic, wherein the predefined tactic prescribes a change to a project;
 - a tactic type to progress milestone category cross-reference table operable to map at least one progress milestone category to the at least one tactic type; [and]
 - update data associated with the progress, actual expenditures, and labor resources of the projects and programs;
 - wherein the data associated with the security access information of personnel comprise a role definition of a coordinator having authorization to assign one or more persons to the at least one business unit, assign at least one role to each person, and add projects and accounts for the at least one business unit;
 - wherein the data associated with the security access information of personnel comprise a role table operable to store at least one valid role, and an authorization hierarchical organization of the at least one valid role, wherein the authorization hierarchical organization is associated with increasing levels of data access;
 - and
 - wherein the data associated with the security access information of personnel associates at least one of the valid roles relevant to the project to each person;
 - at least one user interface operable to display data stored in the program office according to a predetermined security scheme based on the security access information stored in the program office database, and further operable to receive the update data on a periodic basis.
2. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the program office database comprises a plurality of relational data structures.

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3. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the at least one user interface comprises at least one web-based user interface.

4. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the at least one user interface comprises at least one self-extracting executable user interface.

5. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the at least one user interface comprises at least one program office interface.

6. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the program office database comprises more than one copy of the data residing in more than one distributed databases.

7. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the user interface comprises more than one copy of the user interface residing in more than one distributed computing system.

8. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the data associated with security access information of personnel comprise an assignment table associating a person to at least one role defined within a business unit.

9. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the data associated with security access information of personnel comprise an assignment table associating a person to at least one role defined within a business unit, and further to at least one predefined update authority level set by a person having a senior management role within the business unit.

10. Claim 10 was previously canceled.

11. Claim 11 was previously canceled.

12. (Cancel) The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the data associated with security access information of personnel comprise a role definition of a coordinator having authorization to assign one or more persons to the at least one business unit, assign at least one role to each person, and add projects and accounts for the at least one business unit.

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13. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the data associated with security access information of personnel comprise a role definition of an account manager capable of having authorization to update account data and project data.

14. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the data associated with security access information of personnel comprise a role definition of a project manager capable of having authorization to update project data.

15. (Cancel) The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the data associated with security access information of personnel comprise a role table operable to store at least one valid role and an authorization hierarchical organization of the at least one valid role.

16. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the data associated with translating progress milestones comprise a data table operable to map milestones predefined in a project to milestone categories predefined within the program office database.

17. Claim 17 was previously cancelled.

18. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the financial data comprise:
a project forecast table operable to store at least one current budget forecast amount for the project; and
a project forecast history table operable to store an original budget forecast amount if it is different than the at least one current budget forecast amount.

19. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the financial data comprise:
an account forecast table operable to store at least one revenue and expense budget amount associated with an account; and
an account actual table operable to store at least one revenue and expense actual amount associated with the account.

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20. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the informational data comprise a project table operable to store informational data associated with at least one project identified by a project identifier.

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21. The system, as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the project table comprises:
a project identifier uniquely identifying each project;
a business unit identifier of a business unit to which the project belongs to;
at least one person identifier of a person assigned a role having a predetermined responsibility for the project; and
a status flag indicative of whether the project is active, pending, or inactive.

22. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the information data include an account table comprising:
an account identifier uniquely identifying each account;
a business unit identifier of a business unit to which the account belongs to; and
a person identifier of a person assigned the role of an account manager for the account.

23. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the schedule and progress data comprise a milestone actual table operable to store an amount of progress into a specific milestone for a given period for a project.

24. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the schedule and progress data comprise:
a project identifier of a project;
a milestone defined for the project;
a reporting period; and
a percentage completion value of the milestone in the reporting period independent of forecast or actuals.

25. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the update data comprise:
a project actual table operable to store actual expenditure amounts spent during a specific reporting period for a project; and
a milestone actual table operable to store a percentage completion value of a specific milestone defined for a project during the specific reporting period.

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26. The system, as set forth in Claim 24, wherein the update data further comprise an account actual table operable to store actual expenditure amounts spent during the specific reporting period for an account.

27. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the program office database further comprises a user weight table operable to store a weight value indicative of importance for each system affected by the projects and programs.

28. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the program office database further comprises a project roadblock table operable to store information about a problem encountered in a project identified by a project identifier and to enable escalated reporting to upper management about unresolved problems.

29. The system, as set forth in Claim 28, wherein the project roadblock table comprises:

roadblock type;
date and time that the problem was encountered; and
data on how and when the problem was resolved.

30. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the program office database further comprises a transaction log table operable to record what changes were made to data stored in the program office database, who made the changes, and when the changes were made.

31. The system, as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the program office database comprises required data, audit data, program objective specific data, and optional data.

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32. (Amended) A method of managing a program office, comprising:
storing and accessing data associated with at least one project in a program office database, including informational data, financial data, schedule and progress data associated with the at least one project;

storing update data associated with the at least one project;

identifying persons associated with the at least one project, defining a role hierarchy having roles associated with increasing levels of data access, assigning at least one role relevant to the at least one project to each person, and storing data associated with the persons and their assigned roles in the program office database;

wherein assigning at least one role comprises assigning a role of coordinator, a role having authority to add people for a respective business unit, assign some roles to people, and add projects and accounts of a business unit;

storing and accessing a tactic table having at least one predefined tactic supported by the program office database, wherein the predefined tactic prescribes a change to a project;

storing and accessing a tactic type table having at least one valid tactic type;

storing and accessing a milestone category table having at least one category of milestones; and

storing and accessing a tactic type to milestone category cross-reference table associating the at least one milestone category to the at least one tactic type.

33. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein identifying persons further comprises assigning an update authorization level to each person by a person having a senior management role.

34. The method, as set forth in Claim 33, further comprising restricting and permitting viewing, changing and adding data in the program office database according to the assigned role to each person, rules defined in the program office database, and update authorization level assigned to each person.

35. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein assigning at least one role comprises assigning at least one role from the role hierarchy to each person, the roles having increasing capability to access and modify program office database data.

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36. Claim 36 was previously canceled.

37. (Cancel) The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein assigning at least one role comprises assigning a role of coordinator, a role having authority to add people for a respective business unit, assign some roles to people, and add projects and accounts of a business unit.

38. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein assigning at least one role comprises assigning a role of account manager, a role capable of having authority to update project and account data for a respective account.

39. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein assigning at least one role comprises assigning a role of project manager, a role capable having authority to update project data for a respective project.

41. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing data comprise storing and accessing data stored in at least one relational database.

41. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing data associated with the persons and their assigned roles comprise:

storing and accessing an assignment table associating a person identifier to at least one role defined within a specific business unit; and

granting at least one predefined update authority to the person identifier by a person having a predetermined upper management role.

42. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing data associated with the persons and their assigned roles comprise storing and accessing a role table having at least one valid role and an authorization hierarchical organization of the at least one valid role.

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43. Claim 43 was previously cancelled.

44. The method, as set forth in Claim 32 further comprising storing and accessing a data table associating a milestone to the at least one tactic.

45. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing the financial data comprise:

storing and accessing a project forecast table having at least one current budget forecast amount for the project; and

storing and accessing a project forecast history table operable to store an initial budget forecast amount if it is different than the at least one current budget forecast amount.

46. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing the financial data comprise:

storing and accessing an account forecast table operable to store at least one revenue and expense budget amount associated with an account; and

storing and accessing an account actual table operable to store at least one revenue and expense actual amount associated with the account.

47. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing the informational data comprise:

storing and accessing a project table operable to store informational data associated with at least one project identified by a project identifier; and

storing and accessing an account table operable to store informational data associated with at least one account identified by an account identifier.

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48. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing the project table comprise:

storing a project identifier uniquely identifying each project and using the project identifier as a primary key to the project table;

storing and accessing a business unit identifier of a business unit to which the project belongs to;

storing and accessing a person identifier of a person assigned at least one role for the project; and

storing and accessing a status flag indicative of whether the project is active, pending, or inactive.

49. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing the account table comprise:

storing and accessing an account identifier uniquely identifying each account;

storing and accessing a business unit identifier of a business unit to which the account belongs to; and

storing and accessing a person identifier of a person assigned the role of an account manager for the account.

50. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing the schedule and progress data comprise storing and accessing a milestone actual table having an amount of progress into a specific milestone for a given period for a project.

51. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing the schedule and progress data comprise:

storing and accessing a project identifier of a project;

storing and accessing a milestone defined for the project;

storing and accessing a reporting period; and

storing and accessing a percentage completion value of the milestone in the reporting period.

52. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, wherein storing and accessing the update data comprise:

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storing and accessing a project actual table having actual expenditure amounts spent during a specific reporting period for a project; and

storing and accessing a milestone actual table having a percentage completion value of a specific milestone defined for a project during the specific reporting period.

53. The method, as set forth in Claim 52, wherein storing and accessing the update data further comprise storing and accessing an account actual table having actual expenditure amounts spent during the specific reporting period for an account.

54. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, further comprising storing and accessing a user weight table having a weight value indicative of importance for each system affected by the projects and programs.

55. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, further comprising:
storing and accessing a project roadblock table having information about a problem encountered in a project identified by a project identifier; and
reporting any problem to management unresolved after a predetermined time period.

56. The method, as set forth in Claim 55, wherein storing and accessing the project roadblock table comprise:
storing and accessing a roadblock type;
storing and accessing a date and time that the problem was encountered; and
storing and accessing data on how and when the problem was resolved.

57. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, further comprising storing and accessing a transaction log table having what changes were made to data stored in the program office database, who made the changes, and when the changes were made.

58. The method, as set forth in Claim 33, wherein storing and accessing the data comprise storing and accessing data via a web browser-based user interface implementing a security scheme using the role and update authorization level assignment to the users.

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59. The method, as set forth in Claim 33, wherein storing and accessing update data comprise storing the update data via a self-extracting spread sheet-based user interface implementing a security scheme using the role and update authorization level assignment to the users.

60. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, further comprising:
retrieving data from at least one other data source; and
verifying data in the program office database with the data from the at least one other data source.

61. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, further comprising:
retrieving data from at least one project management tool; and
using the data from the at least one project management tool in views, reports, and audits.

62. The method, as set forth in Claim 32, further comprising:
retrieving data from at least one project management tool; and
storing the data from the at least one project management tool in the program office database.

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63. (Amended) A system for managing at least one program including a plurality of projects, comprising:

at least one program office database storing:

informational data associated with projects and programs;

financial data associated with the projects, and programs;

schedule and progress data associated with the projects, and programs;

personnel data associated with persons having responsibility associated with the projects and programs, the personnel data including a unique person identifier for each person;

security data having an assignment of at least one role to each person and an assignment of at least one update authorization to certain persons having oversight responsibility;

a tactic table operable to store at least one predefined tactic supported by the program office database and a tactic type for each tactic, wherein the predefined tactic prescribes a change to a project;

a tactic type to progress milestone category cross-reference table operable to map at least one progress milestone category to the at least one tactic type; and

update data associated with the progress, actual expenditures, and labor resources of the projects and programs;

wherein the data associated with the security access information of personnel comprise a role definition of a coordinator having authorization to assign one or more persons to the at least one business unit, assign at least one role to each person, and add projects and accounts for the at least one business unit;

at least one user interface operable to display and allow access to the data stored in the program office according to a predetermined security scheme based on the person identifier, role and update authorization assignment stored in the at least one program office database, and further operable to receive the update data on a periodic basis.